

THE  
LEGISLATIVE INDEPENDENCE  
OF  
IRELAND VINDICATED;

IN A  
SPEECH of Mr. SHERIDAN, (RMB)  
On the Irish Propositions in the British  
House of Commons,

On MONDAY, the 30th of MAY, 1785.

ALSO AN AUTHENTIC COPY OF THE  
TWENTY RESOLUTIONS

ON THE  
*Irish Commercial Intercourse;*

BEING TAKEN FROM THE VOTES OF THE ENGLISH  
HOUSE OF COMMONS.

(PRICE A BRITISH SIX-PENCE.)

LEGISLATIVE INDEPENDENCE

IRELAND VINDICATED;

IN A

SERMON BY MRS. HARRIS

ON THE 11th PROPOSITION in the British

House of Commons,

On Monday, 11th May, 1782.



ALSO AN

TWENTY-THREE

OF THE

THE COMMONS OF GREAT BRITAIN

BEING TAKEN FROM THE VOICES OF THE ENGLISH  
HOUSE OF COMMONS.

(PRICE A LITTLE OVER HALF A CROWN.)

THE  
LEGISLATIVE INDEPENDENCE  
OF  
IRELAND VINDICATED.

IN A  
S P E E C H  
OF

Mr. SHERIDAN'S  
ON THE  
IRISH PROPOSITIONS,  
IN THE  
BRITISH HOUSE OF COMMONS,

TO WHICH  
IS ANNEXED AN AUTHENTIC COPY  
OF THE  
TWENTY RESOLUTIONS,  
ON THE  
*Irish Commercial Intercourse;*

AS THEY  
Passed that HOUSE, on the 30th of MAY, 1785; and were  
sent up to the HOUSE OF LORDS.

TAKEN FROM THE VOTES OF THE ENGLISH HOUSE  
OF COMMONS.

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D U B L I N :

PRINTED BY P. COONEY,  
AT THE HIBERNIAN PRINTING-OFFICE,  
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M.DCC.LXXXV.

LEGISLATIVE INDEPENDENCE

IRELAND VINDICATED:

S. R. E. C. H.

Mr. SHEPHERD'S

TRINITY PROPOSITIONS

BRITISH HOUSE OF COMMONS

IS ANNEXED AN AUTHENTIC COPY

TWENTY RESOLUTIONS

His Commons' Petition

Printed and Published, as the order of Mr. Shepherd, and with  
the view of the House of Commons.  
TAKEN FROM THE RECORDS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS  
OF COMMONS

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AT THE HIBERNIAN PRINTING-OFFICE  
NEXX-STREET.

MCCCLXXXV.



T H E  
LEGISLATIVE INDEPENDENCE

O F

IRELAND VINDICATED;

I N A

SPEECH of Mr. SHERIDAN'S

*On the Irish Propositions in the British House  
of Commons:*

ON MONDAY, the 30th of MAY, 1785.

MR. SHERIDAN rose, as the question was going to be put, and said, that as the persevering silence of Ministers made it impossible for him to guess whether they meant to admit the amendment in the fourth Proposition or not; and as they had pursued the same conduct in rejecting the amendment moved by a noble Lord near him, which he had the honour of seconding, he would take the opportunity of speaking to the Resolution generally as it had been framed, and defended by the Minister, before it should become still more objectionable, by extending the powers it was to lodge in Great-Britain over the sister kingdom. This, at least, Mr. Sheridan said, was a question on which Gentlemen were no longer to hear the *desires and wishes of Ireland* urged as arguments for their concurrence; it was a matter wholly and entirely new; it was so far from being any part of the offer made by Ireland, that it had never even been hinted at, or alluded to, in the Irish Parliament; it never had been once glanced at by Mr. Orde; it formed no part of the consideration recommended to the attention of the Parliaments of both Kingdoms in his Majesty's gracious Speech from the throne; it was not to be found in the questions referred to the investigation of the Committee of Privy-Council, and the Rt. hon. Gentleman himself (Mr. Pitt) in

in opening this business to the British Parliament had not uttered one word that tended to shew that this Proposition was essential to the settlement proposed between the two kingdoms. The question then was, whether the new Proposition, now in debate, contained matter fit to be proposed from the Parliament of this country to the Parliament of Ireland? In his conscience he thought it did not; — it was injurious to make the offer, and it was folly to believe it could be accepted; it was not enough to say that the Parliament of Ireland *ought* not or *dared* not agree to it; they had not the powers to accede to it; — it would be a concession beyond the limits of their trust; they would betray the confidence reposed in them, and the Irish nation would spurn at the bondage which their degenerate representatives had no authority to engage they should submit to. Much had been argued on a former day relative to the extent and spirit of this Proposition. The event and conclusion of all those arguments from both sides of the House, warranted him now in asserting, that this Resolution went, in the fullest extent, to a complete resumption of the right of external legislation so lately exercised, but so solemnly renounced, by Great-Britain over Ireland. It was unnecessary to repeat those arguments. No Person would again attempt to maintain that this was a measure of experiment, or that it was in the power of Ireland to possess herself of the greatest present benefits from this country, which so many Gentlemen contended she would immediately obtain, as a transfer of British capital, and the establishment of British manufactures; and then, by refusing to place upon her Statute-book some act of this Legislature which she was bound to have adopted, void and annul the whole of this settlement, and revert unmolested to her present situation. A full explanation had been given on this subject, the conclusion from which went distinctly to this: that the present settlement was final and perpetual. That the contracting parties in this momentous business being presumed to act with perfect foresight of the consequences of their irrevocable engagements, neither party could depart from any article stipulated, without breach of faith. Such an infraction in the stronger power, would be an act of despotism and oppression, and would justify the utmost extent of resistance; in the weaker, it would be a direct attempt to disengage herself from all connection with or relation to the empire, and would authorize the vigour of coercion. This was the footing  
upon

upon which the two countries must in future be understood to be united. Upon this view it would be an imposition on common sense to pretend that Ireland could in future have the exercise of free will or discretion upon any of those subjects of legislation, on which she now stipulated to follow the edicts of Great-Britain; and it was a miserable sophistry to contend, that her being permitted the ceremony of placing those laws upon her own Statute-book, as the form of promulgating them, was an argument that it was not the British, but the Irish statute, which bound the people of Ireland. For his part, if he were a Member of the Irish Parliament, he should prefer the measure of enacting, by one decisive vote, that all British laws, to the purposes stipulated, should have immediate operation in Ireland as in Great-Britain; choosing rather to avoid the ignominious mockery of enacting without deliberation, and deciding where they had no power to dissent; where fetters were to be worn, it was a wretched ambition to contend for the distinction of fastening our own shackles.

If this was a fair construction of the purport and necessary consequences of the Resolution, was it a light and trifling consideration, when we reflected on the solemn and decisive manner in which the faith of the two countries had been engaged on this subject? whether Great-Britain should insidiously, by surprise, and collaterally, as it were, make a proposal, which would argue to her a repentance of the bounty, or rather of the justice, which she had done to Ireland; and which, if not accepted, would necessarily destroy for ever all confidence in that country towards Great-Britain on those great constitutional questions, which he had shewn were so near to her breast, and so valuable above all other advantages she had either claimed or acquired? It had been solemnly stipulated between the two kingdoms, that "the right claimed by Ireland, to be bound in all cases whatever, only by laws made by the King, Lords, and Commons of Ireland, should never more be questioned, or questionable." This Resolution did not question that right. No; certainly it did not; it only offered to bargain for it, and proposed conditions on which the right was to be relinquished for ever by Ireland. But who are the parties negotiating, and under what circumstances is the treaty carried on? A final commercial arrangement is declared to be necessary to the future good understanding between the countries;

and this final arrangement it is declared by Britain to be an indispensable condition that Ireland should give up all legislative authority in matters of trade and navigation; and this condition is not fairly put forward in the outset of the treaty, but Ireland is treacherously encouraged to demand a benefit, and then a price is exacted greater than any favour Britain can bestow, while by the manner of granting it, Ireland is at the same time given to understand, that there can never be peace or cordiality between the two countries, till she acquiesces in the sacrifice. When a strong power, conscious of its superiority, treats with a weaker one upon such terms, it may not *question* indeed the right to the possession wished for, but it does more, it hints a menace on the consequence of withholding it; the letter of the compact is not infringed, but the spirit of it is violated. Here Mr. Sheridan said, he would not enter into a discussion, whether it was not reasonable in any Administration, at any time, to entertain an apprehension, that great difficulties might arise in the government of two countries, each possessing an independent legislature, especially in matters of commerce and navigation. To argue theoretically on such a situation, undoubtedly many apprehensions might be justifiable; but what had been the event? It had not proved them to be well-founded; but whatever fears were entertained on the subject, this he was sure of, that the only mode of treating with Ireland in a point of such magnitude, was by fair, explicit, and ingenuous plain-dealing. If the British Government really thought it essential to the future good understanding, and to the common interests of the two kingdoms, that the power of legislating to particular objects should be lodged in one kingdom, only for the common benefit of both, and of consequence in that kingdom which was the head of the empire, it should have been distinctly so stated in the front and outset of the first overture made to the Irish Parliament, as the basis of a permanent agreement. If then, upon due deliberation, and full communication with their constituents and with the country at large, the Parliament of that kingdom had thought it advisable, and had been authorised to treat for the surrender of those rights which they had so lately deemed the only safeguard, either of their commerce or of their constitution, and which they gloried so much to have obtained by their own virtues and spirited exertions; then undoubtedly whatever he might have thought of their



their prudence, he should not have held himself at liberty to make the same comments on the proceeding. (Instead of this, all had been delusion, trick, and fallacy; a new scheme of commercial arrangement is proposed to the Irish as a boon, and the surrender of their constitution is tacked to it as a mercantile regulation. Ireland, newly escaped from harsh trammels and severe discipline, is treated like a high mettled horse, hard to catch; and the Irish Secretary is to return to the field, soothing and coaxing him, with a sieve of provender in one hand, but with a bridle in the other, ready to slip over his head, while he is snuffling at the food. But this political jockeyship, he was convinced, would not succeed; Ireland would spurn at any offer to which such a condition was to be annexed! she would now plainly see that this alarming condition, now indeed declared to be the essence and vital principle of the whole settlement, though introduced as an after-thought, as it were, and as a consequence of the tenor of the requisitions made by Ireland, was no doubt the first original object, and contained the seed and source of the whole business. He was the more confirmed in this opinion, from recollecting many passages in the Rt. hon. Mover's speeches, since he first opened this matter; although it was not then thought prudent even to hint that such a stipulation should be part of the treaty, he constantly made it a topic of accusation against his Rt. hon. Friend (Mr. Fox) that he had permitted Ireland to assert the freedom of her constitution, unconditionally, and without reserving to Great Britain, a necessary controul over her trade and navigation. Here Mr. Sheridan went into a full defence of the conduct of his Rt. hon. Friend on that occasion, he reminded the House of the circumstances of the times, the situation in which Ireland then stood, and maintained that the declaratory statute which Ireland demanded to be repealed, was more disgraceful to the Journals of that House, and more a libel on the principles of this country, than injurious to the people it insulted; but was there a man in that House who would stand up and say, that conditions ought to have been made with Ireland, annexed to this concession, if a concession it could be called? Was there a man who stated this to be his opinion at the time? If the Rt. hon. Gentleman who so frequently repeats this charge, has to plead in his excuse, that he was not then possessed of all that political foresight, and consummate sagacity which three years experience had given him, how

came



came it, that his new ally, the Rt. hon. Gentleman by his side (Mr. Jenkinson), whose prudence and abilities were certainly not immature at that time, so far deserted his duty, as never to protest, while the measure was in its progress, against the indiscretion and rashness of a Minister, whom he had no reason to favour, nor once to warn him, that he was inconsiderately placing the two countries in a situation, in which it was impossible for them to stand, and inducing Parliament to relinquish a right, which it would be indispensably necessary, on the first opportunity to resume; fortunately for the peace and future union of the two kingdoms, no such miserable and narrow policy entered into the mind of his Rt. hon. Friend; he disdained the injustice of bargaining with Ireland on such a subject, nor would Ireland have listened to him if he had attempted it. She had not applied to purchase a constitution, and if a tribute or contribution had been demanded in return for what was then granted, those patriotic spirits who were at that time leading the oppressed people of that insulted country, to the attainment of their just rights, would have pointed to other modes of acquiring them, would have called to them in the words of Camillus, *arma aptare, atque ferro non auro patriam et libertatem recuperare.*

But if he had been surprized at this sort of language coming from those Gentlemen, he had been much more astonished, at another Rt. hon. Gentleman's declaration (Mr. Grenville) that when he had been in an official situation, in Ireland, he had wished for, and meditated a settlement between the two countries, upon the principle of the present proposed system. Had the Rt. hon. Gentleman forgot the second legislative act passed by this Parliament, in acknowledgment of the Constitutional rights of Ireland? Had he forgot that that act was a measure of his administration? and did he remember the solemn pledge, there given, to remove for ever all doubt that any power but the King, Lords, and Commons, of Ireland, should dictate in a legislative capacity to that country? The Rt. hon. Gentleman had stated, that this act had become absolutely necessary, for that Ireland, almost to a man, had conceived that the simple repeal of the 6th of George the First, had not restored to them the security of their constitution, on which yet remained to be acquired, if this was the case, and a bargain were necessary, then was the time for the Rt. hon. Gentleman to have proposed his conditions, and not to have permitted

permitted those for whom he obtained this new acknowledgment, to have conceived him to have been the champion for a more solemn and explicit renunciation of the legislative claims of Great Britain over Ireland, if he had in his mind a reserve, that a settlement was even then necessary, which should reassert those claims, and degrade Ireland to her former state of servile dependance.

With regard to the state of Ireland, it was ridiculous to argue that any circumstances had since occurred to justify or call for the present arrangement. It had been attempted to be proved in the Report of the Committee of Privy Council that Ireland had begun to shew a hostile disposition towards Great Britain, and that she had passed two or three acts, imposing duties on some articles of British export. It was idle to reason from such trivial circumstances. One or two of these acts, it was known, had passed the Irish Parliament rather by stealth and through inadvertency. (No material principle upon which the two countries were to remain connected, had been violated; and when we considered the perpetual shifting of the government and system in Ireland, that every three months wasted over a new Lord Lieutenant, the only wonder was that those principles had been so steadily adhered to. The clamour and riots of Dublin had also been resorted to as pretences for this arrangement; this sort of argument had been sufficiently reprobated by a Rt. hon. Friend of his (Mr. Burke) on a former day, but if clamour was to be attended to, let the meaning of it, where there was any, be preferred to the noise. Had the Irish clamoured for the present settlement, or for any one article contained in it? Had they been loud in demanding access to the British market in preference to protecting duties? Had they requested to be tied for ever to the British monopoly in the West Indies, and to have the price of the commodities of those Colonies increased upon them. Had they complained that fortune had offered the trade of the United States of America to them without condition or restraint? Had they vehemently expressed their apprehensions, that the rich commerce of the East would speedily be open to them, if effectual measures were not taken to prevent it? Had they regretted that they were burthened with a surplus of the hereditary revenue? Had they called out, that they were tired of their Legislative Independence, and intreated to be relieved from it? But the fallacy of stating such flimsy ground, as the supposed

posed cry of the populace, as the real origin and spur of this important arrangement, was too obvious to be commented on. The true spring and incentive to this artful and complicated business evidently lurked in this fourth pernicious Resolution, the tendency of which, was of a piece with their whole system of Government in Ireland, with the arbitrary and illegal proceedings of their agents in the business of attachments, with their attacks on the liberty of the press, measures arguing a mind hostile to the true principles of constitutional freedom, and justifying us in presuming that similar steps would be pursued in this country, if they could be practised with equal impunity.

Mr. Sheridan now adverted to what the noble Lord in the Blue Ribband (Lord North) had said, was his conception of the spirit of the Proposition then in debate. The noble Lord had very fairly stated, that it was unquestionably a *proposal* on the part of the British Parliament, that Ireland should, upon certain conditions, surrender her now acknowledged right of *external legislation*, and return as to that point to the situation from which she had emancipated herself in 1782. The noble Lord had also added, that though he might not approve of the manner and circumstances under which this offer was made, yet he sincerely hoped, that Ireland would forget both, and perceive her interest in acceding to the proposal. The noble Lord was right in saying, that Ireland must *forget* before she could *consent*; but she had more to forget than the insidious and unfair manner in which this proposal came to her; she must forget that Great Britain ever had the power now required to be conceded to her; she must forget the use Great-Britain made of it while she possessed it. And by what arguments is Ireland to be induced to relinquish this right? Can it be stated to her, that she has ever once exercised it to the injury of this country? No, but we are told, that it is possible that she may do so; and is it not equally possible that Great Britain may abuse the trust, and employ this power to the oppression of Ireland? It is argued that the malice of party, the interested views of mercantile speculation, or the folly of narrow politicians, may, at some time or other, lead Ireland, even at the expence of her own interest, to measures which might embarrass the trade and navigation of the Empire. And has Ireland nothing to apprehend from party, from mercantile avarice, or from blind and narrow policy? If it is urged that England is grown too liberal and enlighten-

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ed to justify any such apprehensions on the part of Ireland, the Chancellor of the Exchequer himself contradicts this reasoning, by asserting, that the two hundred thousand manufacturers whose petitions are on the Table, are all influenced either by the suggestions of faction, or blinded by prejudice and selfishness; in truth, there is not a single argument which can be used as an inducement to Great Britain to attempt to refuse this power, which does not equally apply as a motive to Ireland not to part with it; with this difference only, that fact and experience will justify the refusal of the one, but have afforded no pretence for the requisition from the other.

But this power, if returned to Great Britain, is to be returned with this qualification. The laws which Ireland is to be bound to adopt and to obey, are 'to enforce the same restraints, and to confer the same benefits upon the subjects of both countries.' Here then arises a question which will necessarily be duly weighed and duly considered by the Irish. Is it, or is it not possible for Great Britain, under the title of *Law for the Regulation of Trade and Navigation*, or for *regulating and restraining the Trade of the British Colonies and Plantations*, to adopt restrictions and enforce conditions which may materially cripple and embarrass the trade and navigation of Ireland without proportionably affecting the commerce of Great Britain. He took upon him confidently to assert, that this might be done in innumerable particulars. He had stated for example take some instances upon a former day; he had stated that Great Britain might restrain the trade and navigation between the Colonies and these kingdoms to vessels of considerable burthen and a proportionable number of seamen; England has large ships and numerous crews, Ireland has neither. The advantage of Ireland has been supposed to be her making more frequent voyages to the Plantations and for smaller cargoes. Such a measure of legislation as is alluded to, would evidently have a different operation on the commerce of the two Countries. He had stated, that Great Britain reserving the power of prescribing the form of original certificates to be given by the Revenue Officers of the Colonies, and of requiring them to accompany the importation of every article of Colonial produce, imported from Ireland into Great Britain, might, by limiting the time at which they should be allowed, and by various other means entangle and distress the Irish Trader, and the more so, as the restraint was not even



to be reciprocal. He had stated, that Great Britain might make it a condition, that no ship should clear out a cargo from the West Indies, which did not take out a stipulated quantity of some British manufacture not to be obtained in Ireland; but it was unnecessary for him to multiply or argue upon examples. If he was wrangled out of one case, still the principal he went upon was not defeated, for he was not to be called upon to prove the probability of the instances he quoted, or that Great Britain would not injure herself were she to adopt them, because the whole of the present arrangement was built upon this foundation, that it was essential to the system that neither country should retain a power upon any terms to injure the commerce of the other.

But whether it was probable or not that Great Britain would in future exercise this right of external legislation over Ireland with justice and liberality, shutting her ears to prejudice and self-interest, still it must be admitted, that it was claiming a considerable sacrifice from the sister kingdom; and what were the advantages held out to her to induce her to make this sacrifice? He wished the House to view the whole of this matter, and not to confine their attention to the subject of the British market, which had been argued upon as if there was nothing else to be conceded by one side or acquired by the other. What was the present situation of Ireland in respect to all branches of commerce, independent of her intercourse with this kingdom? Here Mr. Sheridan went into a more minute detail, than it is necessary for us to pursue, in order to shew the situation in which Ireland now stood, in respect to her trade with our Colonies and with Foreign Countries, and that in which she was proposed to be placed, should the system of arrangement at present in contemplation, be adopted.

With respect to the West Indies, Ireland was to agree to forego every market, but that of the British Plantations, to give up the cheapest for the dearest, to lose the option she at present possessed, of being supplied circuitously through Great Britain upon the low duties, if she found it not to her advantage to apply to the direct trade for the whole of her consumption, to double her present duties on the article of rum, to impose not only equal port duties upon her exports, but to countervail every internal duty, which Great Britain may impose upon any similar article of her own manufacture, so that if Great Britain was to lay a duty upon the export of

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her linen to those Colonies, which would be of little injury to her. Ireland must do the same, though the reverse would be the consequence; in short, the whole was sacrifice and surrender on the part of Ireland.

As to America, the difference lay in a word. Instead of a trade to that whole Continent without restriction or duty, but what she should think proper herself to impose, she was to admit into her ports no articles of similar growth, produce, or manufacture, to those of the British Colonies, or which were liable to be imported from thence as such, but upon the terms that Great Britain should hereafter dictate. With Africa, she was to be placed upon the same footing as with the West Indies; and for India, she was to abandon all hope and prospect of intercourse with those countries to the end of time, and consent that an immoveable boom should be placed from the Cape of Good Hope to the Straits of Magellan. Thus restrained and dependent, her prospects of European commerce were to be proportionably diminished; these sacrifices could not be disputed; and it was to be considered that every article proposed to be abandoned by Ireland, was an advantage to which her title was not disputed, an advantage that she held as of right, for which she had a claim to compensation if relinquished.

These then being the sacrifices which Ireland was to make in her prospects of an extended foreign commerce, where was to be her retribution? In what instance was the advantage in this treaty to be on her side? From whence was she to receive the boasted compensation? The BRITISH MARKET—that was to be opened to her. *There, and there only*, was she to look for an equivalent for the numerous and important sacrifices she was to make both in commerce and constitution. He defied any man to have the confidence to deny, for a moment, that in every other instance Ireland was not to be placed in an infinitely worse situation than that in which she now stands, and in which she stands by fair and acknowledged right. But how was this advantage to be given to her? Upon what terms was the British market to be opened? If he was to adopt the language and sentiments of those who propose this boon, he should answer, upon such terms as shall effectually prevent Ireland from ever profiting, in the smallest degree by the concession. To this point, all their arguments had tended: to this, all their evidence had been pointed; so that if we were

to give credit to the Minister, and his supporters, this *equitable* treaty, this bargain upon the basis of *reciprocity*, would prove neither more nor less than a direct fraud, cheat, and robbery, stripping Ireland of all the commercial advantages she had obtained, as well as of the constitution which secured them to her, and giving nothing in return, but a right to render herself odious in this country, by an attempt at a rivalry, which could not be profitable to herself, though it might be mischievous to Great Britain. He was not inclined, however, to give credit to the Minister's reasoning on this subject, and much less to the evidence he had brought to support it, the greater part of which had been merely a libel on the character and habits of the Irish nation, nor did he at the same time go with the manufacturers of this country to the extent of the evils which they apprehended—many of their arguments were undoubtedly well founded, and the evidence they had given at the Bar merited the most serious attention; there was one point, however, in which he most completely agreed with them,—in their assertion, that if the Irish trader should be enabled to meet the British merchant and manufacturer *in the British market*, the gain of Ireland must be the loss of England. This was a fact not to be controverted on any principle of common sense, or reasonable argument. The pomp of general declamation and waste of fine words, which had on so many occasions been employed to disguise and perplex this plain simple truth, or still more fallaciously to endeavour to prove, that Great Britain would find her balance in the Irish market, had only tended to shew the weakness and inconsistency of the doctrine, they were meant to support. The truth of the argument was with the manufacturers, and this formed, in Mr. Sheridan's mind, a ground of one of the most vehement objections he had to the present plan. Ireland must not endeavour to rise on the ruin of the trade of Great Britain—she must not aim to thrive avowedly at the expence of the British manufacturer, however alluring the prospect, not justice and generosity alone, but interest and policy, would call upon her to desist from the attempt. Possibly at first she might find a profit and an advantage in the contest—but how was a great part of this advantage to be obtained?—by means incompatible with the true spirit and principles, which led to permanent commercial prosperity, by means which had been stated at the bar, to form a great part of the apprehensions of those who petitioned

petitioned against these Propositions, by a lax execution of her revenue laws, by the corrupt countenance of her legislature to such a conduct, by stealing her own manufactures into this country, by passing those of foreign countries for her own, by obtaining a transfer of capital, and enticing over artists and workmen by false hopes and ill-founded prospects, in short by smuggling, by evading, by defrauding, by conniving, by deceiving. The profit earned by such means would by the system they tend to introduce be ruinous in the end to the country which practised them, while they would immediately deeply injure the sister kingdom if she submitted to them; but that would not long continue, the consequence would be, that even the name of *Irishman* would become odious and detestable to the commercial interest of Great Britain, and Ireland would soon be taught to know, that while she was pressing by all possible means her own advantage from this article of the settlement, she had by other conditions of the treaty surrendered into the hands of Great Britain the power of crippling and crushing the whole scheme of her commerce, of chastising her presumption, and of reducing her to her former state of abject dependence, whenever the interest, the prejudices, or the animosity of the trading part of this community should countenance the measure. Mr. Sheridan urged this in other points of view, and declared, that if he were a person of consideration in Ireland, so far from encouraging the people there to struggle for the British market, he should think it his duty, and what he owed to the interests of his countrymen, to call loudly to the whole land to turn away their eyes and thoughts from that one object, to attempt no race or contest with the British manufacturer, to shun, as the greatest evil, the jealousies, heart burnings, and destructive ill will, which would necessarily breed on such a competition, circumstanced so peculiarly with respect to burthens as Great Britain was, and biassed by rooted habits of thinking upon this particular point, but to endeavour to increase by fair and gentle means the home consumption of the produce of their own industry, and by systematic and vigorous enterprize to aim at a successful intercourse with every foreign port; there, if they met the British merchant, it would be a liberal emulation, there, he could have no innovation or unfairness to complain of, and there, even if successfully rivalled, he would be conscious that the increasing wealth of Ireland, from such a source, might with truth be stated to

be a fund wherein the general commerce of England would assuredly find its compensation. Thus might Ireland be addressed under her present circumstances, but, let the settlement now proposed be once established, what would be the answer? Would not the Irish merchant and manufacturer reply—“What you advise us to is unreasonable and preposterous. We have bound ourselves for ever to the monopolies of Great Britain in the East and in the West; we receive the commodities of both at her will, at her prices, and at her duties; we are crippled in our intercourse with America, holding a precarious and restrained trade with those Sovereign States, as if they were still British Colonies; our dreams of being the depot and emporium for the foreign countries of Europe are of consequence become visionary and ridiculous; we have violated the principles of our Constitution, by giving a perpetual aid to a military force at the will of the executive Magistrate; we have for ever surrendered our right of external legislation into the hands of British Parliament: for all this the British market is our compensation; upon that we are compelled to fasten our minds, to that we must cling, that we must obtain by every possible exertion of every kind, and if Great Britain suffers by it, the mischief is of her own seeking, and the restrictions which force us to this contest of her own imposing.” These would be the happy fruits of a plan, whose boasted object was to cement the union of the two countries, and connect them by bonds of eternal amity and reciprocal affection!

After enlarging on this, Mr. Sheridan concluded with pressing to the attention of the House the Propositions as they then stood, completely changed in spirit, principle and regulation, and begging them to consider them in their true light, as *new* Proposals from the British Parliament, those made by the Irish Parliament being in fact rejected; and to decide whether they were such as human reason could suppose the Irish Parliament, weighing what they are to renounce, and what they are to acquire, could accept, if fair time was given them to argue and deliberate; or if by surprise and management, they were hurried through that Parliament, at a season of thin attendance and relaxed attention, whether the most fatal misunderstandings might not be apprehended, from the country's afterwards discovering the delusion which had been practised upon them, and the arts and fallacies, which had obtained the irrevocable surrender of their dearest rights. The Resolu-

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tion in debate was declared to be the essence of this new system : negative that and the plan fell to the ground ; if it passed that day, a deep wound would instantly be given to the confidence of Ireland in Great Britain ; if adopted rashly by the Irish Parliament, the decisive blow would be struck, and affection and good faith between the two countries be banished for ever.

TWENTY-NINTH

THE

CHAMBER OF COMMONS

ASSEMBLED

ON THE

THURSDAY

THE

THIRTIETH

OF

MAY

1790

IN

THE

CHAMBER OF COMMONS

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AN AUTHENTIC COPY OF THE

## TWENTY RESOLUTIONS

ON THE

### *Irish Commercial Intercourse,*

As they passed the BRITISH HOUSE of COMMONS on the  
30th of MAY; and were sent up to the HOUSE of LORDS.

TAKEN FROM THE VOTES OF THE ENGLISH HOUSE  
OF COMMONS.

I.

**R**ESOLVED, That it is the opinion of this Committee, that  
it is highly important to the general interests of the  
British Empire, that the intercourse and commerce between  
Great Britain and Ireland, should be finally regulated on per-  
manent and equitable principles, for the mutual benefit of  
both countries.

II.

**R**ESOLVED, That it is the opinion of this Committee,  
that it is consistent with the essential interests of the manufac-  
tures, revenue, commerce and navigation of Great Britain,  
that a full participation of commercial advantages should be  
permanently secured to Ireland, whenever a provision equally  
permanent and secure shall be made by the Parliament of that  
Kingdom, towards defraying, in proportion to its growing pro-  
sperity, the necessary expences, in time of peace, of protec-  
ting the trade and general interest of the Empire.

III.

## III.

RESOLVED, That it is the opinion of this Committee, that towards carrying into full effect so desirable a settlement, it is fit and proper that all articles not the growth or manufacture of Great Britain or Ireland, except those of the growth, produce, or manufacture of any of the countries beyond the Cape of Good Hope to the Straights of Magellan, should be imported into each kingdom from the other reciprocally under the same regulations, and at the same duties (if subject to duties) to which they would be liable when imported directly from the country or place from whence the same may have been imported into Great Britain or Ireland respectively, as the case may be; and that all duties originally paid on importation into either country respectively, except on arrack and foreign brandy, and on rum, and all sorts of strong waters, not imported from the British Colonies in the West Indies, shall be fully drawn back on exportation to the other; but nevertheless, that the duties shall continue to be protected and guarded as at present, by withholding the drawback, until a certificate from the proper officers of the revenue in the kingdom, to which the export may be made, shall be returned and compared with the entry outwards.

## IV.

RESOLVED, That it is the opinion of this Committee, that it is highly important to the general interests of the British empire, that the laws for regulating trade and navigation should be the same in Great Britain and Ireland, and therefore, that it is essential towards carrying into effect the present settlement, that all laws which have been made, or shall be made in Great Britain, for securing exclusive privileges to the ships and mariners of Great Britain, Ireland, and the British Colonies and Plantations, and for regulating and restraining the trade of the British Colonies and Plantations, such laws imposing the same restraints, and conferring the same benefit on the subjects of both kingdoms, should be in force in Ireland by laws to be passed by the Parliament of that kingdom for the same time; and in the same manner as in Great Britain.

## V.

RESOLVED, That it is the opinion of this Committee, that it is further essential to this settlement, that all goods and commodities of the growth, produce, or manufacture of British

tish or foreign Colonies in America, or the West Indies, and the British or foreign settlements on the coast of Africa, imported into Ireland, should on importation be subject to the same duties and regulations as the like goods are, or from time to time shall be subject to upon importation into Great Britain, or if prohibited to be imported into Great Britain, shall be prohibited in like manner from being imported into Ireland.

## VI.

RESOLVED, That it is the opinion of this Committee, that in order to prevent illicit practices, injurious to the revenue and commerce of both kingdoms, it is expedient that all goods, whether of the growth, produce or manufacture of Great Britain or Ireland, or of any foreign country, which shall hereafter be imported into Great Britain from Ireland, or into Ireland from Great Britain, should be put by laws to be passed in the parliaments of the two kingdoms, under the same regulations with respect to bonds, cockets, and other instruments, to which the like goods are now subject in passing from one port of Great Britain to another.

## VII.

RESOLVED, That it is the opinion of this Committee, that for the like purpose it is also expedient, that when any goods, the growth, produce, or manufacture of the British West India islands, or any other of the British colonies or plantations, shall be shipped from Ireland for Great Britain, they should be accompanied with such original certificates of the revenue officers of the said colonies as shall be required by law on importation into Great Britain; and that when the whole quantity included in one certificate, shall not be shipped at any one time, the original certificate properly endorsed, as to quantity, should be sent with the first parcel; and to identify the remainder if shipped within a time to be limited, new certificates should be granted by the principal officers of the ports in Ireland, extracted from a register of the original documents, specifying the quantities before shipped from thence, by what vessels, and to what ports.

## VIII.

RESOLVED, That it is the opinion of this Committee, that it is essential for carrying into effect the present settlement

ment, that all goods exported from Ireland to the British colonies in the West Indies or in America, or to the British settlements on the coast of Africa, or to the countries beyond the Cape of Good Hope to the Streights of Magellan, should from time to time be made liable to such duties and drawbacks, and put under such regulations as may be necessary, in order that the same may not be exported with less incumbrance of duties or impositions than the like goods shall be burthened with when exported from Great Britain.

## IX.

RESOLVED, That it is the opinion of this Committee, that it is essential to the general commercial interests of the Empire, that so long as the Parliament of this kingdom shall think it advisable, that the commerce to the countries beyond the Cape of Good Hope, to the Streights of Magellan, shall be carried on solely by an exclusive company, having liberty to import into the port of London only, no goods of the growth, produce, or manufacture of the said countries, should be allowed to be imported into Ireland, but through Great Britain; except dye-stuffs, drugs, cotton, or other wool and spices, which may be imported into Ireland from foreign European countries, so long as the same are importable from foreign European countries into Great Britain; and that it shall be lawful to export such goods of the growth, produce, or manufacture of any of the countries beyond the Cape of Good Hope, to the Streights of Magellan, from Great Britain to Ireland, with the same duties retained thereon as are now retained on their being exported to that kingdom, but that an account shall be kept of the duties retained and not drawn back on the said goods exported to Ireland, and that the amount thereof shall be remitted by the Receiver General of his Majesty's customs in Great Britain, to the proper officer of the revenue in Ireland, to be placed to the account of his Majesty's revenue there, subject to the disposal of the Parliament of that kingdom; and that the ships going from Great Britain to any of the said countries beyond the Cape of Good Hope to the Streights of Magellan, should not be restrained from touching at any of the ports in Ireland, and taking on board there any of the goods of the growth, produce, or manufacture of that kingdom; and that no ships be allowed to clear out from Ireland for any of the said countries, but such ships as shall be freighted by the said company, and which shall have sailed from the port of Lon-



don; and that whenever the commerce to the said countries shall cease to be so carried on solely by such an exclusive company, the goods, the growth, produce, or manufacture of the said countries beyond the Cape of Good Hope, to the Streights of Magellan, should be importable into Ireland from the same countries from which they may be importable into Great Britain, and no other.

## X.

RESOLVED, That it is the opinion of this Committee, that no prohibition should exist in either country against the importation, use, or sale of any article the growth, produce, or manufacture of the other, except such as either kingdom may judge expedient from time to time upon corn, meal, malt, flour, and biscuits; and except such qualified prohibitions, at present contained in any act of the British or Irish Parliament; as do not absolutely prevent the importation of goods or manufactures, or materials of manufactures, but only regulate the weight, the size, the packages, or other particular circumstances, or prescribe the built or country, and dimensions of the ships importing the same; and also except on ammunition, arms, gunpowder, and other utensils of war importable only by virtue of his Majesty's licence; and that the duty on the importation of every such article, (if subject to duty in either country) should be precisely the same in the one country as in the other, except where an addition may be necessary in either country, in consequence of an internal duty on any such article of its own consumption, or an internal bounty in the country where such article is grown, produced, or manufactured, and except such duties as either kingdom may judge expedient from time to time upon corn, meal, malt, flour, and biscuits.

## XI.

RESOLVED, That it is the opinion of this Committee, that in all cases where the duties on articles of the growth, produce or manufacture of either country are different on the importation into the other, it is expedient that they should be reduced in the kingdom where they are the highest, to an amount not exceeding the amount payable in the other, so that the same shall not be less than ten and a half *per centum*, where any article was charged with a duty, on importation into Ireland, of ten and a half *per centum*, or upwards, on the 17th day of May, one thousand seven hundred and eighty-two; and



and that all such articles should be exportable from the kingdom into which they shall be imported, as free from duties as the similar commodities or home manufacture of the same kingdom.

## XII.

RESOLVED, That it is the opinion of this Committee, that it is also proper that in all cases where the articles of the consumption of either kingdom shall be charged with an internal duty on the manufacture, the same manufacture, when imported from the other, may be charged with a farther duty on importation, adequate to countervail the internal duty on the manufacture, (except in the case of beer imported into Ireland, as far as relates to the duties now charged thereon) such farther duty to continue so long only as the internal consumption shall be charged with the duty or duties to balance which it shall be imposed; and that where there is a duty on the raw material of any manufacture in either kingdom, less than the duty on the like raw material in the other, or equal to such duty, such manufacture may, on its importation into the other kingdom, be charged with such a countervailing duty as may be sufficient to subject the same, so imported, to burthens adequate to those which the manufacture composed of the like raw material is subject to, in consequence of duties on such material in the kingdom into which such manufacture is so imported; and that the said manufactures so imported shall be entitled to such drawbacks or bounties on exportation as may leave the same subject to no heavier burthen than the home made manufacture.

## XIII.

RESOLVED, That it is the opinion of this Committee, that in order to give permanency to the settlement now intended to be established, it is necessary that no new or additional duties should be hereafter imposed in either kingdom, on the importation of any article of the growth, produce or manufacture of the other, except such additional duties as may be requisite to balance duties on internal consumption, pursuant to the foregoing resolution, or in consequence of bounties remaining on such article when exported from the other kingdom.

## XIV.

## XIV.

RESOLVED, That it is the opinion of this Committee, that for the same purpose it is necessary farther, that no new prohibition or new or additional duties should be hereafter imposed in either kingdom on the exportation of any article of native growth, produce or manufacture, from the one kingdom to the other, except such as either kingdom may deem expedient from time to time, upon corn, meal, malt, flour and biscuits.

## XV.

RESOLVED, That it is the opinion of this Committee, that for the same purpose it is necessary that no bounties whatsoever should be paid or payable in either kingdom, on the exportation of any article to the other, except such as relate to corn, meal, malt, flour, and biscuits, and except also the bounties at present given by Great Britain on beer and spirits distilled from corn, and such as are in the nature of drawbacks or compensations for duties paid, and that no bounties should be payable in Ireland on the exportation of any article to any British colonies or plantations or to the British settlements on the coast of Africa, or on the exportation of any article imported from the British plantations, or from the British settlements on the coast of Africa, or British settlements in the East Indies, or any manufacture made of such article, unless in cases where a similar bounty is payable in Great-Britain on exportation from thence, or where such bounty is merely in the nature of a drawback or compensation of or for duties paid over and above any duties paid thereon in Great Britain; and that where any internal bounty shall be given in either kingdom on any goods manufactured therein, and shall remain on such goods when exported, a countervailing duty adequate thereto may be laid upon the importation of the said goods into the other kingdom.

## XVI.

RESOLVED, That it is the opinion of this Committee, that it is expedient for the general benefit of the British empire, that the importation of articles from foreign countries should be regulated from time to time in each kingdom, on such terms as may effectually favour the importation of similar articles of the growth, produce or manufacture of the other, except in the case of materials of manufacture which

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are or hereafter may be allowed to be imported from foreign countries duty free; and that in all cases where any articles are or may be subject to higher duties on importation into this kingdom, from the countries belonging to any of the states of North America, than the like goods are or may be subject to when imported as the growth, produce or manufacture of the British colonies and plantations, or as the produce of the fisheries carried on by British subjects, such articles shall be subject to the same duties on importation into Ireland, from the countries belonging to any of the states of North America, as the same are or may be subject to on importation from the said countries into this kingdom.

## XVII.

RESOLVED, That it is the opinion of this Committee, that it is expedient that such privileges of printing and vending books, as are or may be legally possessed within Great Britain, under the grant of the Crown or otherwise, and the copy-rights of the authors and booksellers of Great Britain, should continue to be protected in the manner they are at present by the laws of Great Britain; and that it is just that measures should be taken by the Parliament of Ireland, for giving the like protection to the similar privileges and rights in that kingdom.

## XVIII.

RESOLVED, That it is the opinion of this Committee, that it is expedient, that regulations should be adopted with respect to patents to be hereafter granted for the encouragement of new inventions, so that the rights, privileges, and restrictions therein granted and contained, shall be of equal force and duration, throughout Great Britain and Ireland.

## XIX.

RESOLVED, That it is the opinion of this Committee, that it is expedient that measures should be taken to prevent disputes touching the exercise of the right of the inhabitants of each kingdom, to fish on the coasts of any part of the British dominions.

## XX.

XX. And it is the opinion of this Committee,

**RESOLVED.** That it is the opinion of this Committee, that the appropriation of whatever sum the gross hereditary revenue of the kingdom of Ireland (the due collection thereof being secured by permanent provisions) shall produce after deducting all drawbacks, repayments, or bounties granted in the nature of drawbacks, over and above the sum of six hundred and fifty-six thousand pounds in each year, towards the support of the naval force of the Empire, to be applied in such a manner as the Parliament of Ireland shall direct, by an act to be passed for that purpose, will be a satisfactory provision, proportioned to the growing prosperity of that kingdom, towards defraying in time of peace, the necessary expences of protecting the trade, and general interests of the Empire.



**THE END.**